

# CP 3 -11: Academic Policies

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COLLEGE POLICY CP 3-11

APPROVED: February 1, 2021

EFFECTIVE: February 1, 2021

REVIEWED:

REFERENCES: NWCCU Standard 2.C.1 – 3; BP 3-11; BOR 300

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## **Privacy and Release of Student Education Records**

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) was enacted in 1974. It is a set of regulations that applies to those institutions, such as Dawson Community College, that receive funding from the Department of Education.

FERPA was written specifically for students and guarantees them the right to inspect and review their education records, the right to seek to amend education records, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from those education records.

## **Notification Regarding Release of Student Directory Information**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. "Education records" are "those records, files documents, and other materials which 1) contain information directly related to a student; and 2) are maintained by an educational institution. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(a)(4)(A); 34 CFR § 99.3). FERPA applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Generally speaking, FERPA allows DCC to disclose education records or personally identifiable information from education records in the following circumstances: with the written consent of the student, if the disclosure meets one of the statutory exemptions, or if the disclosure is directory information and the student has not placed a hold on release of directory information.

Dawson Community College defines the following information as public (directory) information:

- Student's name
- Street address
- Email address (campus email)
- Telephone number
- Dates of attendance
- Full-time/Part-time status
- Degrees and awards received
- Major field(s) of studies
- Class

- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student
- Weight and height, if student is a member of an intercollegiate athletic team
- Student photography and video images

FERPA allows DCC to release a student's directory information to anyone unless the student informs the DCC Registrar that he or she does not wish directory information to be released.

### **NO to Release of Directory Information**

If you do not wish to authorize the release of directory information, you must inform the Registrar of this by completing a DCC Confidentiality Request form, which can be obtained from the Registrar's Office. You should allow at least three business days for processing.

### **When restricting information**

Students should be aware that restricting the release of your directory information has other consequences. For instance, a FERPA restriction makes it difficult or impossible for potential employers to verify your enrollment, or to verify the fact that you have earned a degree from DCC. DCC cannot notify your hometown paper about awards and honors you receive, e.g., President's Honors list, graduation list, etc. For this reason alone, many students choose to remove their FERPA restriction.

### **Change from NO to YES**

At any time after restricting the release of your directory information, you may change your mind and choose to authorize DCC to release directory information. You can grant such authorization at any time by going to the Registrar's Office with a valid photo identification.

### **Notification of Students' Rights under FERPA**

FERPA also affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day DCC receives a request for access.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. (*This process cannot be used to challenge a grade.*)
3. The right to provide written consent before DCC discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except that DCC will disclose the following information without a student's consent:
  - a. Compliance with a lawfully issued subpoena or judicial order.
  - b. Requests in connection with a student's application for financial aid.
  - c. Information submitted to accrediting organizations.
  - d. To other agencies or institutions that have requested the records and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.
  - e. Requests by federal and state authorities and authorized third parties designated by federal and state authorities to evaluate a federal or state supported education program; to researchers performing certain types of studies; in connection with statewide longitudinal data systems studies and tracking.

In the case of emergencies, DCC may release information to appropriate

### **Student Academic Integrity Guidelines**

The student is responsible for cooperating with the instructor in his/her efforts to create a classroom environment that is conducive to the teaching/learning process. In order to do this, the student must become an active participant in the process and maintain an attitude of respect toward the instructor and other students. Students must conduct themselves in an orderly and responsible fashion or they will not be allowed to remain in the class. More specifically:

- Students should be prompt and regular in attending classes, make appointments when necessary to meet with faculty and keep such appointments, be well prepared for classes, and submit required assignments in a timely manner.
- Integrity of the academic process requires that credit be given where credit is due. Accordingly, it is a breach of academic integrity to present as one's own work, the ideas, representation or works of another, or to permit another to present one's work without customary and proper acknowledgment of authorship. Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times within permissible limits of assistance as stated by the faculty.
- Some of the more common breaches of academic integrity are as follows: unauthorized talking or moving about in class; heckling, badgering, or ridiculing classmates or the instructor; disruptive neglect of personal hygiene; disorderly, lewd, indecent, or obscene conduct; discriminating remarks or actions; verbal abuse; threatening actions or words; dishonesty (i.e., plagiarism, cheating, etc.); willful disobedience of the instructor in the performance of their duties.

### **Consequences for Infractions**

Each instructor will be responsible for determining when the frequency, duration, or intensity of the behavior is beginning to compromise the instructional environment. This determination allows for differences in instructor style and tolerance and the content and context of each respective course. When an instructor judges a student to be violating these integrity guidelines and informal correction methods have not been effective, the instructor will follow this procedure:

- The instructor will indicate to the student, during class, that the behavior is unacceptable.
- If the behavior persists, the instructor will discuss the problem with the student outside of the classroom. This discussion should include a clear statement of what the instructor expects and of what will happen if the behavior continues.
- If the behavior continues, the student may be asked to leave class. At this time, the instructor should notify the Dean of Academics, in writing.
- The instructor may withdraw the student from the class, with concurrence of the Dean of Academics and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. The attempted corrective actions should be documented by the instructor and should accompany the withdrawal form.
- If the disruptive behavior is occurring in other classes, or if it is of sufficient duration, intensity, or frequency, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs may impose a disciplinary suspension.
- If behavior continues, the student will attend a hearing with the President, the result of which may be expulsion.

### **Instructor Academic Integrity Guidelines**

Individuals with teaching responsibilities present scholarship fairly, accurately, and objectively. Derivative scholarship acknowledges the source of intellectual property, and personal views, beliefs, and opinions are identified as such. The instructor retains the primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining an effective teaching/learning relationship with and among students.

The instructor must assure classroom conditions are such that they promote each student's development, but not at the expense of other students. More specifically, the instructor is responsible for establishing and implementing academic standards, establishing and maintaining communication, and enforcing behavioral standards in the classroom that support these academic standards.

If a student feels that an instructor has been remiss in honoring this responsibility, the student may utilize the student grievance procedure to pursue resolution.

### **Student Grievance Procedure**

- The student should arrange a time to discuss the specific problem with the course instructor within one week of the occurrence of the problem.
- If the problem persists, the student should discuss the problem with his/her academic advisor. The advisor should take action within one week of being notified of the problem by discussing the problem with the instructor and/or the Dean of Academics, documenting the problem and possible resolution(s).
- If a resolution is not met within one week of the advisor's action/decision, the student/advisor may request a hearing with the Dean of Academics. This request must be in writing, documenting specifically the problem, the dates and results of attempts to reconcile the problem, and the student's desired resolution. The Dean of Academics will then arrange a hearing with the student/advisor, instructor, and any parties involved to determine a course of action. All efforts to complete this process within one week of receiving the written appeal will be made.
- If the resolution is unsatisfactory, the student may request, again in writing, a hearing with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The request should be forwarded to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs who will place the issue on the agenda of the next Institutional Effectiveness Committee meeting. The student will then be informed of the recommended final resolution by the Committee members.

### **Academic Credits**

#### **Credit Hour**

DCC operates on a semester system and grants semester credit. One semester credit is equivalent to approximately 45 hours of student involvement – usually 15 hours of classroom contact and 30 hours of outside class studying, researching, reading, etc. Students are encouraged to remember this and should work with their advisor to determine the appropriate credit load when enrolling in late-start or 6-week sessions.

In general, a class that meets one hour per week throughout the semester yields one semester hour of credit. Exceptions to this general rule include courses with labs; these courses are adjusted on the semester course schedules to reflect the proper meeting requirements.

#### **Classification of Students**

- Full-time: students registered for 12 or more credit hours per semester;
- Part-time: students registered for fewer than 12 credit hours per semester;
- Freshman: students having fewer than 30 credits;
- Sophomore: students having earned 30 or more credits.

**Credit Load**

Students are encouraged to enroll in at least 15 credits per semester to ensure timely progress toward their degree or certificate. However, DCC knows that students may have other commitments, responsibilities, or demands on their schedule, and encourages students to consider these commitments and discuss their credit load with their advisor.

Registration in 12 or more credits per semester is considered full-time enrollment. Registration in fewer than 12 credit hours per semester is considered part-time enrollment for registration purposes.

**Credit Overload**

Students wanting to take more than 21 credits in a semester must have at least a 2.50 GPA and obtain permission from their advisor and approval by the office of the Dean of Academics before being allowed to register.

**Auditing Courses**

A student who registers as an auditor attends class regularly. The student does not take the final examination, does not receive an achievement grade, and does not receive credit for the course. Students wishing to audit must meet all prerequisites required for the course and indicate their intention to audit at the time they register and pay for the course. Audited courses cannot be applied toward a degree or certificate and cannot be used to meet prerequisites.

**Curricula**

DCC offers college-level transfer and vocational courses in a variety of disciplines. College-level classes are numbered 100 to 299. Generally, those identified as 100 to 199 are freshman level and those identified as 200 to 299 are sophomore level. Some sub-100 courses are also taught. Students should select sub-100 courses only on the recommendation of their advisor. These courses do not count toward your degree or total of credits need to receive a degree.

**Online Courses**

Dawson Community College offers online courses through two types of online delivery methods. Online delivery utilizes media rich virtual classrooms to deliver the same instructional experience to students on and off campus. This tool allows online students to stream video and share textbook or classroom notes presented during lecture and discussion. Dawson's online delivery allows full interaction between students and instructors for the best possible learning opportunity. DCC employs DCC Moodle and DCC Online platforms.

Students may take online courses towards their DCC degree in the following areas:

- Associate of Arts
- Associate of Arts in Chemical Dependency Counseling
- Associate of Science
- Associate of Applied Science in Business Management
- Associate of Applied Science in Criminal Justice
- Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education
- Associate of Applied Science in Rural Organization Employee Management
- Rural Organization Employee Management Certificate
- Human Resources Certificate

### **Challenging Courses**

Any course is eligible to be challenged. Prior to challenging a course, a “request to challenge” form must be completed with the approval of the faculty member and Dean of Academics. Any course previously taken as an audit course or as a credit course may not be challenged for credit.

### **College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)**

DCC recognizes the vast differences in background and preparation of individuals who are preparing to enter college. DCC utilizes the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). The purpose of this program is to allow students and prospective students to take examinations, which measure knowledge in a variety of subject matter areas. Evaluation of the results determines whether proficiency is equivalent to that which would be expected upon completion of a college level course in that subject. Credits will be posted after the student earns 12 credits at DCC. Credits earned through CLEP apply toward graduation requirements. A satisfactory (S) grade is granted upon earning the required examination score. Students should consult with the Admissions Office for information concerning registration, cost, administration, and standards.

### **Course Substitution**

Students may request a substitution for any stated course if they have previously completed a college course in which the subject learning outcomes closely parallels that of the course for which they request the substitution. All substitutions must be approved by the program director/instructor and the Dean of Academics. In no instance will a reduction be made in the number of credits required for any academic program. Forms are available in the Registrar’s Office.

### **CTE Course Waiver**

A required program (CTE) course may be waived if the student has previously completed equivalent work. All waivers must be approved by the appropriate program director and the Dean of Academics. General education core requirements cannot be waived. In no instance will college credit be given for a waiver. Forms are available in the Dean of Academics Office.

### **Experiential Learning**

Dawson Community College recognizes learning acquired outside of the traditional classroom setting and follows NWCCU Standard 2.C.7 for granting of experiential credit. Documentation submitted by the student for accomplishments on the job, through volunteer work, or through training, workshops and seminars based on time in service, job description, supervisor’s evaluation, relationship to the curriculum and credit recommendations from the American Council on Education (ACE) may be reviewed and considered for credit. Experiential learning credit granted by another institution may not be accepted for transfer to DCC. In addition, experiential learning credits granted by DCC may or may not transfer to other institutions.

Students seeking experiential learning credits must complete twelve (12) semester credits with a minimum GPA of 2.00 at Dawson Community College. Upon completion of the credit requirement, students should work with their academic advisor to complete an “Experiential Learning Request” form. The appropriate DCC Program Director and/or instructor will make a recommendation whether to grant experiential learning credit (and the number of credits as applicable) to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs makes the final decision on whether the experiential learning credits are granted and, if so, how many credits are awarded.

Credit for prior experiential learning may constitute no more than 25% of the credits needed for a degree and/or certificate. Credits will only be granted to students enrolled in the semester during which an “Experiential Learning Request” form is submitted. Approved credits will be posted on a student’s transcript with a grade of satisfactory (S) and denoted as credit for experiential learning.

### **Video/Audio Recording**

Students must obtain the instructor’s advance permission before recording any classroom lectures/presentations. This permission will include specifications of what may be recorded, how it may be used, and for how long. This “intellectual property” policy has been adopted to protect the integrity of these presentations. Instructors may record any of their classroom lectures or presentations without permission from students present.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at Dawson Community College are expected to do their own work and in their own words and with their own ideas. If they quote or paraphrase the words of others, they are expected to indicate whom it is they are paraphrasing. An instructor, who believes a student has cheated or claimed the work of someone else as his/her own, may take disciplinary steps as outlined under Academic Integrity Guidelines. This may include, but not be limited to, giving a failing grade or referring the student to others for further discipline.

### **Class Attendance Policy**

Dawson Community College supports the philosophy that learning is optimal when students attend classes regularly and participate in the learning environment through interaction with colleagues and instructors. Therefore, the student is responsible for maintaining regular attendance in registered classes. Approved absences due to college-sponsored activities are excused. Absences due to serious illness or strictly unavoidable circumstances may be excused if the instructor is completely satisfied as to the cause. An excused absence does not, under any circumstances, relieve the student of the responsibility for completing the course work to the satisfaction of the instructor.

### **Changing Course Registration**

Students may make changes to their course schedules after they have registered for classes. They should meet with their academic advisor to discuss the changes as they pertain to graduation requirements and potential transfer issues. Changes to course schedules may be completed within the time frames published in the academic calendar. Please refer to the Academic Affairs section of the catalog for information regarding the College’s Drop/Add Policy.

### **Adding a Course**

Students may add a class up through the 8th instructional day of the fall and spring semesters. Workshops, short-courses (including summer courses) and other nontraditional courses may be added within the first 10% (approximately) of the course, subject to approval by the instructor. A student seeking to add a course that results in a course load of 21 or more semester credits requires the approval of the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

### **Dropping a Course**

Students may drop a class for a refund based on the Refund Policy. A course that has been dropped within this time frame will not appear on a student’s transcript. Students are strongly encouraged to

work with their academic advisor as dropping a class may impact progress toward a degree/certificate, enrollment status and financial aid status.

- *Fifteen (15) Week Fall and Spring Semesters:* Through the eight (8th) day of classes
- *Ten (10) Week Fall and Spring Sessions:* Through the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) day of classes
- *Six (6) Week Fall and Spring Sessions:* Through the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) day of classes
- *Sessions Less Than Six (6) Weeks in Length:* Through ten (10) percent of class days that have occurred
- *Refunds for Summer Term:* First (1st) through third (3rd) day of classes

### **Withdrawing From a Course**

Students may withdraw from a course on any class day during the regular class semester, but not after finals have commenced. Please refer to the academic calendar for specific withdrawal dates. If the withdraw takes place on or before the last date to withdraw, students will be receiving a “W” grade. If the withdraw takes place after the last date to withdraw, students will be receiving a “WF” grade. A “W” grade has no grade point average (GPA) value and will not change the student’s previous cumulative GPA. A “WF” grade will be calculated within the GPA in the same manner as an “F”.

Students wanting to withdraw from all courses must complete a “Withdrawal Form” and submit it to the Registrar’s Office.

### **Administrative Withdrawal**

DCC reserves the right to perform an administrative withdrawal for students who fail to attend classes or have extenuating circumstances. Students should not rely on an administrative withdrawal, but rather are expected to take the initiative to complete the required procedure to drop a course.

### **Fresh Start Policy (Academic Bankruptcy)**

The Fresh Start option is a one-time opportunity for DCC students to begin a new cumulative (or Fresh Start) GPA. This allows students to “bankrupt” previous coursework they have completed at DCC in which they received poor grades. Although the bankrupted coursework will remain on the student’s academic record, the credits and grades will not be carried forward into the student’s cumulative GPA. Students should note that all previous DCC grades and credits will be excluded and will not be used to fulfill any degree requirements when the Fresh Start option is chosen. To be eligible for the Fresh Start option, students:

- Must not be enrolled in any institution of higher education for a minimum of five years, and;
- Will be placed on academic probation when returning to college, and;
- Must complete 15 credits in residence with at least a GPA of 2.50 upon their return to DCC, and;
- Must apply for the Fresh Start option within one calendar year after returning to DCC, and during the semester following that in which the student meets the eligibility requirements;
- Students wishing to petition for a Fresh Start GPA should contact the Registrar.

### **Grades/Grading Policy**

A student’s evaluation is based upon grades. Grade reports are issued after each semester, providing the student’s credentials and financial obligations to the college are fulfilled. The grading system values (A through F), as established by the Montana Board of Regents, are listed below.



A	Excellent
A –	3.7
B +	3.3
B	Above Average
B –	2.7
C +	2.3
C	Average
C –	1.7
D +	1.3
D	1.0
D –	Minimum Achievement
F	Failure to Meet Course Standards
W	Withdrawal (given pursuant to drop/add policy)
WF	After the last day to withdraw and is included in GPA as “F”
I	Incomplete (given pursuant to incomplete policy). The work must be completed by the following regular semester. A permanent grade of A-F or S/U will then be assigned
N	No credit is earned. Audit must be declared at time of registration.
S/U	Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory S = Satisfactory (C- or better), U = Unsatisfactory (D+ or less). S/U grade option may be given for physical education activity courses, extension classes, seminars, and

	workshops. S/U is mandatory for work and field internships.
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The instructor for the course selects the grading option as outlined in the course syllabus, and utilizes it for the entire class and term.

**Note:** A course that is used to satisfy the prerequisites or required courses in an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science or a Certificate of Applied Science must be passed with a “C-” or better. A course that is used to satisfy a general education program must be passed with a “C-” or better. (Montana Board of Regents Policy 301.5.3).

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is computed by dividing the total grade points by the number of credits attempted. Grades of S, U, W, I and N/Audit are not included in calculating the GPA.

### **Grade Changes**

Students questioning a grade received on their official transcript must contact the instructor before the completion of the following term. Grade changes are not allowed after one semester has elapsed except in unusual circumstances. Student appeals must go through the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

### **Incomplete (“I”) Grades**

Students are expected to complete the coursework for a class during the time designated. Occasionally, circumstances prevent timely completion and the student may request extra time to finish the work. A form to apply for such an extension is available from the Registrar. The student, the instructor, and the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs must sign this form.

In all cases, an “I” is given at the discretion of the instructor with the concurrence of the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs following these guidelines:

- The student has been in attendance, is doing passing work (C- or better), and has completed a minimum of 75% of the course.
- For reasons beyond the student’s control, and which are acceptable to the instructor, the student has been unable to complete the requirements of the course on time. In certain cases, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs may be requested to certify personal hardship cases.
- The instructor must set the conditions for the removal of the incomplete on an “application for incomplete” form, which is provided by the Registrar. When completed by the instructor and signed by the instructor and the student, this form must be filed with the Registrar.
- The instructor determines the deadline for a student to fulfill the requirements outlined in the “application for incomplete” form (not to exceed the last day of the following semester).
- A grade of “incomplete” that is not made up in the prescribed time will automatically become an “F”.

### **Repeating Courses**

Any course at DCC may be repeated. Only the most recent grade and credits earned for a course toward cumulative GPA calculations and graduation requirements is used. This applies for all grades including a lower grade than previous attempts. Repeated courses are denoted on a student's transcript with the use of "I" Included and "E" Excluded for the first and second attempts, respectively. Students receiving financial aid should check with the Financial Aid Office before repeating a course.

**Note:** A course that is used to satisfy the prerequisites or required courses in an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science or a Certificate of Applied Science must be passed with a C- or better. A course that is used to satisfy a general education program must be passed with a C- or better.

### **Scholastic Honors**

Students who carry a full load (12 or more semester hours) of work graded with grade points and who earn a G.P.A. of a 3.5 or higher for the semester will be placed on the Presidential Honor List.

Those students who have a G.P.A. of at least 3.25 and less than 3.50 are given honorable mention. Names of students with "I" (incomplete) grades for the semester will not be placed on these lists.

### **Graduation**

Students who are eligible for degrees or certificates must file an application in the Registrar's office during the semester preceding the semester in which they expect to graduate. Graduation fee must be paid before the end of the semester in which you graduate.

An accumulative G.P.A. of 2.00 is needed to graduate. A student may graduate by fulfilling requirements for a certificate or degree in any DCC catalog under which the student has been enrolled as a full-time student during the five years prior to graduation. The catalog in effect at the time of matriculation will be used unless otherwise specified by the student.

A student who completes all of the degree requirements and has at least a 3.5 to 3.74 overall G.P.A. will graduate from DCC with Honors; students with a G.P.A. of 3.75-4.00 will graduate with High Honors.

### **Scholastic Probation/Suspension**

A student whose grade point average is 1.75 or below in any given semester will be placed on scholastic probation. This student must then consult with their advisor before being allowed to register for more than 12 credits. A student whose cumulative GPA remains below 2.00 after the probation semester may be suspended from school and one full semester of non-enrollment may be required.

### **Tests**

All tests, including final examinations, which are counted as part of the instructional calendar, should be taken at the designated time. In emergency cases, the instructor's approval is required before the student is released of exam responsibility.

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History: 02/01/2021